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Beyond Race and Gender: Motivating Enlisted Personnel to Remain in Today's Military

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Abstract

This paper provides a theoretical explanation for factors that have been found to influence the intentions of junior enlisted personnel to remain in today's military. Data from the Armed Forces 1996 Equal Opportunity Survey reveal that both the *pay and benefits* and *pride in service* variables have stronger effects on the propensity of junior-enlisted personnel to remain in the military than do the *race, gender, or racial climate variables*. Still, *satisfaction with pay and benefits* has a significant positive effect on the likelihood that respondents will stay in the military; *pride in service* is more robust.

This finding has policy implications for the recruitment and retention of today's military personnel. The neoclassical, economic paradigm that has formed the basis of the Services' recruitment and retention policies since the advent of the All-Volunteer Force (AVF) is deficient in addressing the intangible needs of military personnel. A central theme of this study is that the military institution must change its paradigm if it is to adequately address current problems of recruitment and retention. As illustrated in this paper, Etzioni's socioeconomic paradigm provides a plausible alternative to the laissez-faire, neoclassical model currently employed by the U.S. Department of Defense. The socioeconomic model, unlike the neoclassical model, assumes that people make decisions not only out of self-interest, but also because they are part of a larger community. I propose that a socioeconomic paradigm allow for the military to develop policies that address non-economic as well as economic factors that influence men and women to remain in the military.

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Introduction

The purpose of this study is to provide a theoretical explanation for factors that have been found to influence the propensity of men and women to serve in the American Armed Forces. Moskos' institution/occupation model and Etzioni's socioeconomic paradigm are major sociological frameworks that help to explain and critique the structure of today's military. While the military has maintained a certain degree of autonomy over the last three decades, it has increasingly reflected broader societal trends, and is becoming more like labor market organizations in the civilian society. The case will be made that changes that have accompanied the All-Volunteer Force (AVF) have reduced military service to an occupation. Further, this has had more negative than positive consequences for the quality of military personnel, the social representation of the Armed Forces, as well as for recruitment and retention rates.

The analysis will be guided by the following four propositions: **Proposition 1**. Today's military personnel are motivated to serve by non-material factors as well as economic factors. **Proposition 2**. The All-Volunteer Force is premised on a philosophy that emphasizes marketplace incentives. **Proposition 3**. The All-Volunteer Force provides a favorable equal opportunity climate as well as favorable employment opportunities for racial minorities and women. **Proposition 4**. The incentives currently used by the Armed Forces to motivate personnel to serve on active-duty are deficient in addressing the normative need for group affiliation. Most of the data for this study are provided by the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC), and the Department of Defense (DoD) 1996 Equal Opportunity Survey.

Recruiting Quality Personnel and Retaining Them

On June 14, 2001, the Associated Press published findings of a Rand Corporation study on ways of improving life for people in the military. The study was commissioned by Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld to implement policies on "reshaping the U.S. nuclear forces, improving the Pentagon's financial management, and transforming the military to a more mobile force. " U.S. retired Navy Admiral, David Jeremiah, led the study. In a DoD news briefing held on June 13th, Jeremiah announced that the propensity of men and women to join today's U.S. military is low. He identified the following four key areas for the Department of Defense to address in resolving its recruitment and retention

issues: *workplace, force management, personnel and family support, and leadership.*

For workplace improvements, Jeremiah recommended that the Services modernize the infrastructure of their installations by improving facilities to enhance the abilities of members to work more effectively. Among his recommendations for force management, Jeremiah suggested a military pay increase for performance in the workplace. In his words, ". . . some people will get paid more because they have special skills, and that's the way of the world" (Associated Press 2001). Another recommendation Jeremiah made is for DoD to improve personnel and family benefits. Using the military's medical system as a case in point, he pointed out that *Tricare* has been under funded for a long period of time.

Perhaps the most challenging of Jeremiah's recommendations were directed at military leaders. According to Jeremiah, before the military can resolve the recruitment issue, leaders must convince subordinates, as well as the general public, that military service is a *noble* profession. It is up to the leaders, Jeremiah argued, to convey to military personnel that the work they do is both noble and appreciated. Additionally, he asserted, the American public needs to know that the military offers occupations "that their sons and daughters can be committed to because there are careful stewards who will train them, and lead them, and protect them, and never waste them inappropriately" (Associated Press 2001).

Jeremiah correctly identified the intangible reward of appreciation, and the belief that military work is noble, as being the types of compensation that lead people to choose to serve in the military. As he eloquently stated, "It is compensation that you don't get by more pay; it is compensation that leads people to choose that profession because they believe in patriotism, they believe in their country, they believe in discipline, they believe in things that the military represents." Jeremiah alludes to the fact that there exists a deficiency in the current military paradigm in addressing the intangible needs of military personnel. Additionally, he places the onus of correcting this flaw on the shoulders of military leaders. For Jeremiah, this problem would be resolved if leaders "communicate nobility and value of military service, engage the public, reinforce integrity throughout the chain of command, and improve the command climate."

Previous studies support Jeremiah's assessment about intangible rewards. Indeed, nonmaterial factors significantly motivate persons to serve in the military. Looking at the patterns of recruitment and retention of enlistees during the early phases of the AVF, John Faris found that success in recruiting and retaining soldiers resided in the persistence of a "citizenship soldier ethic." Faris observed further that while the citizenship concept attenuated before the end of the draft system, a residue of the concept remains in the AVF (Faris 1984). In a more recent study, Moore (2000) found that *pride in service*

2

influences enlisted members to serve longer terms of service (Moore 2000). Analyzing data from DoD's *1996 Equal Opportunity Survey* (EOS), she found the variable, *pride in service,* to be a more powerful predictor of the propensity of enlisted military personnel to remain in the military than *satisfaction with pay and benefits* (Moore 2000; also see Table in Appendix A). While other variables, such as marital status, educational attainment, racial climate, and the combined effects of race/ethnicity and gender were significant, none of them had as much explanatory power as did *pride in service* (Moore 2000; Table in Appendix A). These findings suggest that the neoclassical, economic model, which dominates policies on military personnel, is inadequate in addressing the desire that service members have for community pride and group affiliation.

The Military Is More Than Just A Job

The military is a social institution that bears both similarities and dissimilarities with other institutions in American society. Like other institutions, it fulfills a societal need, and reflects the values of the broader society. Military organizations are conservative and seek not to change laws, but to uphold and defend the U.S. Constitution. Additionally, the military is to some degree controlled by external power, as it is dependent upon the civilian society for its resources (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978). Still, the military is a unique social institution, charged with the inimitable task of national defense. As stated by Military Sociologist Charles Moskos,

> The nation has entrusted its armed forces with responsibilities rarely, if ever, found in civilian life: defending the national interest, the real possibility that military members will risk life and limb in that role, and, in recent years, the awesome responsibility of deploying and guarding the nuclear arsenal (Moskos and Wood 1985:5).

Unlike most social institutions in the United States, the military has a coercive compliance structure and follows two imperatives for personnel recruitment and assignments: military effectiveness, and citizenship rights and responsibilities. The United States' definition of citizenship is rooted in the English notion of obligation as well as rights (see: Marshall 1963; Janowitz 1983:1-3; Segal 1989:97-99). Historically, the U.S. military has been an avenue of upward mobility for ethnic immigrants and racial minorities who were able to obtain citizenship rights as a result of fulfilling the obligation of military service. During the Vietnam Era, the citizenship right to vote was extended to American 18-year-olds as a result of military service. This was accomplished in 1971 through the passage of the 26th Amendment. In addition to group rights, individual members receive benefits for having served in the Armed Services. Among the many individual rights for military service are educational benefits, home mortgages, and retirement benefits.

3

**Proposing an All-Volunteer Force (AVF):
Accompanying Structural Changes, And Voiced Concerns**

The Gates Commission:

On March 27, 1969, the President of the United States issued an announcement that he had appointed an advisory commission on an all-volunteer armed force under the chairmanship of former Secretary of Defense Thomas Gates. The commission had been directed to develop a comprehensive plan for eliminating conscription (the military draft) and moving toward an All-Volunteer Force. An AVF, commissioners argued, would strengthen American freedom by removing the inequity imposed on the expression of patriotism. They also declared that an AVF would promote the efficiency of the Armed Forces, and enhance its dignity (U.S. President 's Commission 1970).

During the time the Gates Commission was appointed, the United States involvement in the Vietnam War was being challenged and the military draft was under attack. The American public was concerned that the draft was too costly, and was a divisive procedure in procuring personnel for national defense. The commission echoed some of these concerns and argued that the draft imposed heavy burdens on a small minority of young men while easing the tax burden for everyone else. Further, commissioners asserted that the draft had introduced needless uncertainty into the lives of all young American men, and had burdened draft boards with decisions about who should serve and who should be deferred. According to the Gates Commission, the military draft had weakened the political fabric of society (U.S. President's Commission 1970).

Noteworthy is the fact that this was not the first time in American history that obligatory service was opposed. Opposition to a large standing army surfaced as early as the Colonial period (O'Sullivan and Meckler 1974; Segal 1989:17-44). For many colonists, the idea of a military establishment was associated with the religious and political oppression characteristic of the armies in seventeenth century Europe. Soon after the War of Independence, the Continental Congress reduced the standing army. As a consequence, the colonies were too weak to suppress the Shay's Rebellion. This led to a Constitutional Convention, which was called in 1787 to resolve the dilemma of a Federal Government that was either too weak to protect against invasion, or so powerful as to interfere with the independence of the former colonies. The resolve was that the Federal Government had the authority to tax, develop, and maintain an army and navy, and to declare war (Segal 1989).

Hence, the American government has always been confronted with the conflicting issue of military preparedness and the democratic freedom of choice. This debate surfaced again during the War of 1812, during the burning of the nation's capital in 1814, the Mexican War in 1846, the Civil War in 1863, the War against Spain in 1898, and again when Congress passed the draft law in 1940. It

then follows that by the late 1960s the military draft was once more on the political agenda.

The Gates Commission recommended that the U.S. Government move towards an All-Volunteer Force by making several structural changes. One recommendation was for the military to raise the average level of basic pay for personnel in their first two years of service. Another suggestion was for the U.S. Government to make comprehensive improvements in the conditions of military service. Finally, the commission advised that a standby draft system be established and activated by joint resolution of Congress upon request of the President.

Objections to an All-Volunteer Force:

The idea of an All-Volunteer Force raised concerns among many military scholars and government officials. Some feared that an AVF would be too costly for the nation to afford. Another concern was that an AVF would lack the flexibility to expand rapidly in times of sudden crises. It was also argued that an AVF would undermine patriotism by weakening the traditional belief that each citizen has a moral responsibility to serve the country. Some made the case that the presence of draftees in a conscripted force guards against the growth of a separate military ethos. Consistent with this argument was the matter that an All-Volunteer Force could pose a threat to civilian authority, American freedom, and democratic institutions (U.S. President's Commission 1970).

Another set of objections centered on the issue of social representation. Critics argued that the higher pay associated with an AVF would be especially appealing to African Americans, who have relatively poorer occupational opportunities in the civilian sector. They worried that high rates of unemployment in the civilian sector combined with higher re-enlistment rates for African Americans would lead to a disproportionate number of them serving on active-duty. These critics claimed that the rate of White enlistment and reenlistment might decline due to a greater presence of African Americans, which could lead to an all-Black enlisted force. They argued further that the problem would only be exacerbated by a resulting Black resentment at bearing an undue share of the burden of defense.

Similarly, some argued that most of the individuals joining an AVF would be from the lowest economic classes, motivated primarily by monetary rewards rather than by patriotism. Still another concern was that a voluntary force would be less effective because not enough highly qualified youths would be likely to enlist and pursue military careers. Table 1 contains a list of several arguments that were posed against an AVF, and the Gates Commission's responses to them.

5

Table 1

Objections Raised Against An All-Volunteer Force and The Gates Commission's Responses

OBJECTION	GATES COMMISSION'S RESPONSE
Too costly for the nation to afford	An AVF would be less costly than the cost of a mixed force of volunteers and conscripts as some of the costs of a mixed force appears as tax-in-kind and are not recorded in the budget. A draft imposes social and human costs by distorting the personal life plans of youth, and by forcing society to deal with difficult problems like that of conscientious objection.
An AVF would lack the flexibility to expand rapidly.	Military preparedness depends on forces already in place and not on the ability to draft untrained men. A standby draft could be put into effect promptly.
An AVF would undermine patriotism by weakening the traditional belief that each citizen has a moral responsibility to serve the country.	Compelling service through a draft undermines respect for the government by forcing individuals to serve in a manner that the government decides without regard to the individual's values and talents. A voluntary decision is the best answer both morally and practically as to who should serve in the military.
Doing away with the presence of draftees in a mixed force may lead to a separate military ethos among military members that could pose a threat to civilian authority, American freedom, and democratic institutions.	In the United States and England, where voluntarism has been used consistently, there is the strongest tradition of civilian control of the military. The attitudes of the officer corps are the preponderant factor in the psychology of the military; and with or without the draft, professional officers are recruited voluntarily. Eliminating conscription in the lowest ranks would not threaten the tradition of civilian control.
Higher pay required for an AVF would be especially appealing to Blacks who have poor occupational opportunities in the civilian sector. This combined with higher re-enlistment rates of Blacks would lead to a disproportionate number of Blacks in the military. White enlistment will decline leading to an all-Black enlisted force.	If higher pay makes opportunities in the AVF more appealing to some groups in society that do not find such attractive alternatives in civilian life, then the appropriate course of action is to correct the discrimination in civilian life and not to introduce additional discrimination in the military against such groups.
Those joining the AVF will be individuals from the lowest economic classes, motivated primarily by monetary rewards rather than by patriotism. An AVF would be staffed by mercenaries.	By maintaining the existing mental, physical, and moral standards, the AVF would not differ significantly from one of conscripts and volunteers.
An AVF would foster an irresponsible foreign policy.	The AVF would have the same professional leadership; changes in the lower ranks will not alter the character of leadership, the degree of civilian control, nor would it affect foreign policy.
Not enough highly qualified youth will join.	Improved compensation, conditions of service, proficiency pay, and accelerated promotions will make the AVF attractive to the highly skilled.
The Department of Defense will cut back expenditures in other areas.	The size of the defense budget depends on public attitude, not on a change to an AVF.

An Assessment of the All-Volunteer Force

Since the advent of the AVF in 1973, there has been a growing similarity between the organizational structure of the military and that of the civilian labor market. For example, there is a greater similarity between military and civilian leadership style; military leaders tend to use a more collegial and less authoritarian method of leading. Morris Janowitz forecasted this trend more than a decade before the AVF came into being (see Janowitz 1960). There is also more similarity between civilian and military occupations as far as the work that people do (Biderman and Sharp 1968). Much of this convergence is attributable to the rise in technology that has influenced the world of work in all arenas. However, this trend has become even more apparent in the military since the AVF has come into being. Studies have also shown that since the AVF has been in effect, military personnel display political attitudes more like those displayed by men and women in civilian society (Janowitz and Moskos 1979). These and other structural changes have redefined the U.S. military as discussed in further detail below.

Moskos' I/O Model

To illustrate the structural changes in the U.S. military that have been ushered in with the AVF, it is useful to examine Moskos' seminal *institution/occupational* model. In 1977, Moskos conceptualized the military organization in terms of two ideal-typical models: institutional and occupational. He observed that the American military was moving from an institutional format to one resembling an occupation. The institutional model, Moskos claimed, emphasizes organizational interest and self-sacrifice. Moreover, an institution is legitimated in terms of values and norms. It is an establishment in which members have a purpose transcending self-interest in favor of a presumed higher good, and are often viewed as following a calling. In addition, Moskos asserted that members of an institution generally regard themselves as being different or apart from the broader society, and are so regarded by others. Finally, members of an institution are recipients of a paternalistic-remunerative system; payment in kind rather than in cash. Moskos' institutional model is analogous to Ferdinand Tonnies' characterization of close-knit societies *(gemeinschaft),* in which people stress intimate personal relationships, and share values and sentiments (See Henslin 2001:107).

Military service, as Moskos illustrated, has traditionally had many institutional features. Historically, and still today, military personnel have been subjected to military discipline and law. They are also prohibited from resigning, striking, or negotiating for improved working conditions. Service members have been recipients of a paternalistic-remunerative system in the form of food, housing, uniforms, and subsidized consumer facilities on military installations (Moskos 1977). The selective service system was premised on the notion of citizen obligation, with concomitant low salaries for junior enlisted personnel.

Further, the military institution has been organized vertically in which members acquire an understanding and sense of responsibility for the performance of the whole. Moskos asserted that being a part of the military has traditionally been more important than the fact that military members do different jobs.

An organizational model, by contrast, implies self-interest, rather than that of the employing organization, and is legitimated in terms of the marketplace (laissez-faire economics). Hence, monetary rewards are given for equivalent competencies. Supply and demand rather than normative considerations are paramount. Occupations are organized horizontally. Moskos' organizational model parallels Tonnies' *gesellschaft* societies in which human interaction is likely to reflect self-interest, individualism, and impersonality (see Henslin 2001:107). Moskos asserted that while an all-volunteer military in and of itself need not be correlated with an occupational model, the architects of the present AVF chose the occupational model as their paradigm. Indeed, the Armed Forces have always contained elements of both the institutional and occupational formats. However, the contemporary military leans more toward an occupational format, a trend that was catapulted by the end of the draft. While institutional features exist in today's military, they are less pronounced than they were during the draft era.

Consequences of an Occupational Orientation

The occupational orientation of the AVF has raised questions about consequences for the overall mission of the U.S. military. Moskos and Wood (1988) argued quite cogently that an occupational orientation (what the authors refer to as *occupationalism*) is in fact detrimental to military effectiveness in terms of performance, motivation, and military professionalism. Institutional identification, they argue, fosters greater organizational commitment and performance than does occupational commitment (Moskos and Wood 1988:4-5). They argue further that the military requires a level of commitment to work performance unparalleled in the civilian sector. As stated by Moskos and Wood,

> The armed forces require certain behavior from their members
> that can never be made to serve individual interests, certainly
> not in a narrow economic sense. Internalization of institutional
> values implies nearly unbounded definitions of tasks and the
> manner in which these tasks are to be carried out. The logic
> of *occupationalism*, conversely, is to define task boundaries
> and to set standards of accomplishment that, if met, signify
> adequate performance. In general, an occupation pays
> enough to fill the job and to get it done----no more. (Moskos
> and Wood 1988:5)

Another consequence of *occupationalism*, Moskos and Wood (1988) argued, is that it has replaced motivation based on personal values (*intrinsic*)

with motivation based on pay (*extrinsic*). Citing from Barry Shaw's work on intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, they claim that the interaction between intrinsic and extrinsic rewards can be nonadditive (Shaw 1976; Moskos and Wood 1988). In other words, inducing military members to perform tasks with the use of extrinsic rewards "may create behavior that will not be performed in the future except for even greater extrinsic rewards" (Moskos and Wood 1988:5). Furthermore, they argue, the Armed Forces may be weakening intrinsic motivation in personnel by using extrinsic rewards, and thereby increasing their expectation for pay.

A third effect of *occupationalism* for Moskos and Wood (1988) is that it undermines military professionalism. By this, the authors are referring to the way that decisions are made in the Armed Forces. *Occupationalism* reduces the military function to dollars, and concurrently reduces decisions on military organization and personnel to a cost-benefit analysis. Consequently, "decisions are removed from the military profession. An institutional approach, on the contrary, never loses sight of the uniqueness of military organization in a democratic society" (Moskos and Wood 1988:5). Table 2 summarizes the consequences of *occupationalism* for the U.S. military as advanced by Moskos and Wood.

Table 2

Consequences of *Occupationalism* of the U.S. Military According to Moskos and Wood (1988)

Variable	Institution (draft era)	Occupation (AVF era)
Mission Performance	An effective leader motivates members to do more than, they are supposed to do.	An effective manager prevails on workers to do just what they are supposed to do.
Motivation	Members are *intrinsically* motivated. They act out of personal values.	Workers are *extrinsically* motivated. They act out of a desire for monetary pay.
Decision Making	Is in the hands of military professionals and is largely internal to the military.	Is reduced to cost-benefit analysis, undermines military professionalism, and is external to the military.

Trends in Personnel Quality, Representation, and Retention Rates

Thus far some historical factors have been examined that led to the American AVF, as well as theoretical critiques of it. What follows is a discussion about statistical trends in personnel quality, representation, and retention rates since the advent of the AVF, with a focus on how well the data support the theories.

Quantity and Quality Issues:

Following the arrival of the AVF, military scholars raised questions as to whether or not the Services had been able to meet their personnel objectives. Another concern was whether or not the quality of recruits had been sacrificed in any way. Exploring these inquiries, Curtis Gilroy, Bob Phillips and John Blair separated the AVF into four analytic phases: 1973-1976, 1977-1979, 1980-1982, and 1983-1987 (Gilroy, Phillips, and Blair 1990). They found that the Army was able to meet numerical and quality goals during the years 1973-1976 (the first phase) because the highly popular *GI Bill of Rights* was still in effect. There was also an expanding youth population, and rising unemployment rates that made the military an attractive alternative.

The Second Phase (1977-1979) was the Army's worst recruiting period because the American economy had expanded and unemployment rates dropped. Recruiting resources were thought to be more than adequate and became a target for budget cuts (Perhaps the most noticeable cut was in December 1976 with the expiration of the GI Bill of Rights.) Additionally, the growth in the youth population had leveled off (Gilroy, Phillips, and Blair 1990). In another study, Janowitz and Moskos (1979) found a decline in the educational levels of new Army male recruits during this period, which reflected the difficulty the Army was experiencing in recruiting.

During the third phase (1980-1982), the Army met both quantity and quality objectives. This, the authors attributed to a military pay raise by Congress in 1982. In addition, the civilian unemployment rate was once again on the rise. Finally, the Services were devoting more resources to advertising, which in turn, played a very influential role in attracting quality recruits (Gilroy, Phillips, and Blair 1990).

The most interesting finding was of the fourth and final phase in the analysis (1983-1987). Although the youth population was actually decreasing, and unemployment rates were also going down, the Army was still able to attract quality personnel. The authors explained this finding in terms of the new educational incentive known as the Army College Fund (ACF). The ACF functioned as an incentive for intelligent, college bound youth to join the military, a segment of the population who would otherwise be disinclined to do so. The

author's conclusion was that the U.S. military would continue to attract quality personnel so long as it offered pecuniary rewards such as pay, bonuses, and educational benefits, and non-pecuniary rewards such as perceived applicability of service training to later civilian life. They also recommended that the Services select the appropriate people for recruiting duty and provide them with appropriate incentives (Gilroy, Phillips, and Blair 1990).

In more recent years the quality of recruits has increased. Today, 99 percent of military accessions with no prior service are high school graduates, and more of them are scoring higher on the Armed Forces Qualifying Test (AFQT), indicating high achievement. (The AFQT is a composite of 4 of the 10 components of the Armed Forces Vocational Aptitude Battery. This battery of test is given to applicants at high schools, Military Entrance Processing Stations (MEPS), or independent sites, and is used to determine eligibility of military applicants.) Seventy-five percent of military recruits in 1991 scored in the upper 50th percentile of the AFQT (U.S. OASD 1999). A current problem faced by all of the services is that of retaining a sufficient number of personnel (discussed more below under retention).

Social Representation of the AVF

Race/Ethnicity

Since the AVF has been in effect, the number of African Americans in the military has increased. During the early phases of the AVF, African Americans tended to be concentrated in low-skilled fields, as opposed to technical specialties, but they tended to be well educated. Janowitz and Moskos found that during the 1970s, the proportion of Black high school graduates entering the Army had exceeded that of Whites. This trend was becoming even more obvious in 1977 when African Americans entering the Army were better educated than their White counterparts. They accounted for 65 percent of the high school graduates compared to the 53 percent of entering Whites (Janowitz and Moskos 1979). The U.S. Army's enlisted force was the only major organization in American society where Black educational levels surpassed that of Whites, and by a noteworthy margin. Still, non-commissioned and junior commissioned officers complained that many entrants with high school diplomas did not possess the educational attainment normally associated with completion of high school (Janowitz and Moskos 1979).

Janowitz and Moskos illustrated further that the Army's enlisted ranks reflected increasing reliance on two discrete streams: one from minorities, principally Blacks, but also Hispanics, and the all-volunteer army attracted not only a disproportionate number of minorities, but also an unrepresentative segment of the White youth population (Janowitz and Moskos 1979).

11

Today, African Americans serve in the military at a rate disproportionately higher than their representation in the broader society (see Figure 1). While they make up 12.2 percent of the American population, they are 22.4 percent of the enlisted force of all DoD, and 29.1 percent of the enlisted force of the Army (see Figure 1). This overrepresentation reflects greater opportunities for African Americans in the military as compared with those of the civilian sector. African Americans are not only overrepresented in the enlisted ranks, but they are also represented at all rank levels from private to sergeant major.

Conversely, the representation of Whites and, to a lesser degree, Hispanics in the military is lower than their population in the broader society (see Figure 1). White Americans represent 71.3 percent of the American population and only 62 percent of the enlisted force of DoD, and 55.2 percent of the Army's enlisted members (see Figure 1). This gap is less pronounced for Hispanics whose numbers have been continually increasing in the military in recent years. Hispanics make up 11.9 percent of the overall population and approximately 9 percent of the enlisted forces in DoD and the Army (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Race/Ethnic Representation of the Total U.S. Population, DoD, And the U.S. Army as of 2000 (Sources: DMDC and U.S. Census)
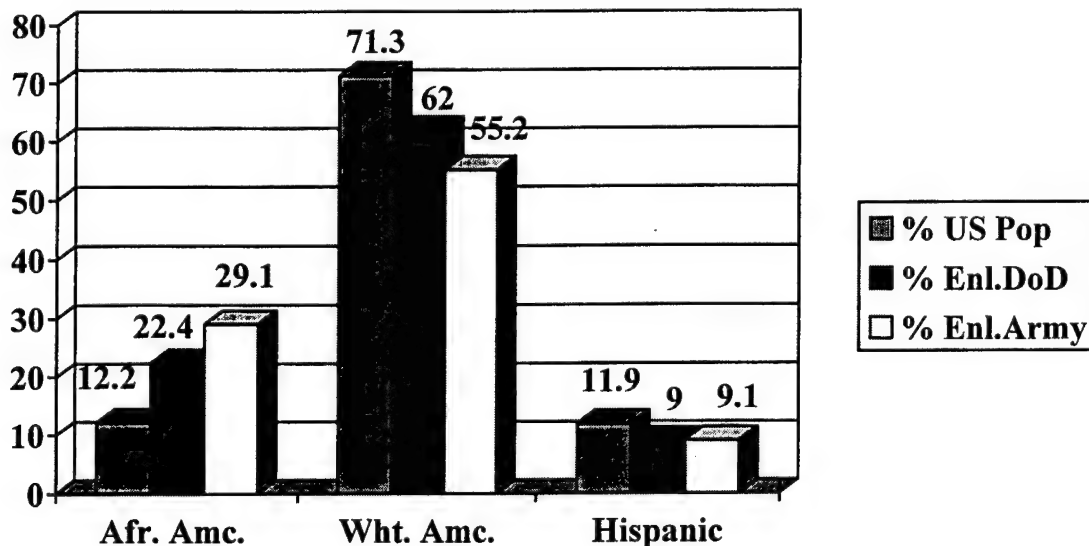
An examination of the racial/ethnic distribution of DoD over the last thirteen years shows a slight decrease in representation of Whites from 1988-

1992, and again from 1993-1998 (see Figure B-1 in Appendix B). The representation of Whites increased in 1999, and has been relatively stable from 2000-2001 (see Figure B-1 in Appendix B). In the Army, the representation of Whites decreased from 1988-1992, slightly peaked in 1993, and has been decreasing every year since (see Figure B-2 in Appendix B). The same trend for African Americans in all of DoD is the mirror image of that of Whites. The percentage of African Americans increased slightly from 1988-1992, and again from 1993-1998, decreased in 1999, and has been relatively stable from 2000-2001 (see Figure B-1 in Appendix B). With the exception of a decline in 1993, the percentages of African Americans in the Army have been relatively stable for these years (see Figure B-2 in Appendix B). The percentages of Hispanics in all of DoD, and those for the Army, have been increasing for these years (see Figures B-1 and B-2 in Appendix B).

From time to time the overrepresentation of African Americans in the military raises some ethical and political concerns. This issue surfaced in the social science literature during the late 1970s and in subsequent years. One concern was that the disproportionately large Black participation in the military would discourage White participation (Schexnider 1980; Butler 1991). I disagree with this assessment as the number of White enlisted members began to decline prior to the AVF. As I have stated elsewhere:

> Because of this country's ambivalent attitudes toward African Americans, social groups such as organizations, neighborhoods, and schools have been devalued erroneously when the proportion of African Americans increases. This was not the case, however, with the United States military, which had begun to lose white male enrollment even before the number of African Americans increased. The increased enrollment of African Americans was an effect and not a cause of the refusal of white middle class men to serve on active duty. During the 1970s and 1980s African Americans in general, and African American women in particular were joining the military in disproportionately large numbers because they were doing a job that other segments of the population did not want to do (Moore 1996).

On the other hand, some observers have asserted that the overrepresentation of African Americans in the American Armed Forces is a good thing. This, they argued, is because the U.S. military provides employment opportunities for African Americans that do not exist in the civilian sector (Dellums 1975; Schexnider 1976; Schexnider and Butler 1976). Although these views appear to advocate sound remedies to unemployment in the short term, they neglect the fundamental issue of choice. For a group with so few employment options, is military service really a choice?

Although African Americans are overrepresented in the enlisted ranks of the Armed Forces, they are underrepresented in the officer ranks, in terms of their overall population in the United States. Today, African Americans make up 8.1 percent of the officers on active duty in all of DoD, and 12.2 percent of the general population. While on the surface this appears to be an under representation, it actually is not when we consider that a college degree is a prerequisite for the officer corps. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, African Americans made up only 7.4 percent of the college graduates for 1999. As stated in a previous study:

> . . . [S]ince officers must have a college degree, this level of officer representation compares favorably with the national proportion of African-American college graduates . . . Moreover, while the total percentage of African Americans in the Army has been slightly decreasing over the last 10 years, the percentage of African-American officers had increased slightly (Moore and Webb 2000:218).

Gender

The AVF has also increased opportunities for women to serve in the active force. The termination of the draft coincided with the increased emphasis on equal employment for women in the American economy, leading to a relative surge in the number of women enlisting in the military. Before 1967, the representation of women in the military was restricted to 2 percent. Public Law 90-130 called for the removal of the 2 percent restriction in 1967, and by 1974, women made up 3 percent of the active duty forces. Five years later, the number of women in the military had increased three-fold. By 1988, women comprised 10.4 percent of the active Armed Services. Today, 14.6 percent of the active forces in all of DoD are women (see Figure 2). Of all the Services, women are most represented in the Air Force, where they make up 19.4 percent of the enlisted force (see Figure 2).

These trends reflect greater opportunities for women in the Armed Forces due to a growing tolerance in the broader society toward women serving on active-duty, as well as to the interest on the part of the Services to recruit more women (Moore and Webb 1998). Recent changes in military laws and policies (e.g., repeal of combat exclusion statutes) allow not only for greater participation of women, but also for women to fill a wider array of military occupations (Moore and Webb 1998). Under Public-Law 94-106, women were admitted to the three major service academies in 1976. Two years later, Congress passed legislation abolishing the Women's Army Corps as a separate unit. In more recent years, active duty Army women have been deployed in increasing numbers to combat zones. In 1983, 179 women were deployed to Grenada during Operation Urgent

Fury. Seven years later, over 26,000 women soldiers were deployed to the Gulf region during operations Desert Shield and Storm. Shortly after the war, in 1991, Congress lifted the ban on women flying combat aircraft and serving on combat ships (Moore and Webb 1998).

Figure 2

**Percent of Women in the Enlisted Active Forces
1988-2001 (Source: DMDC)**
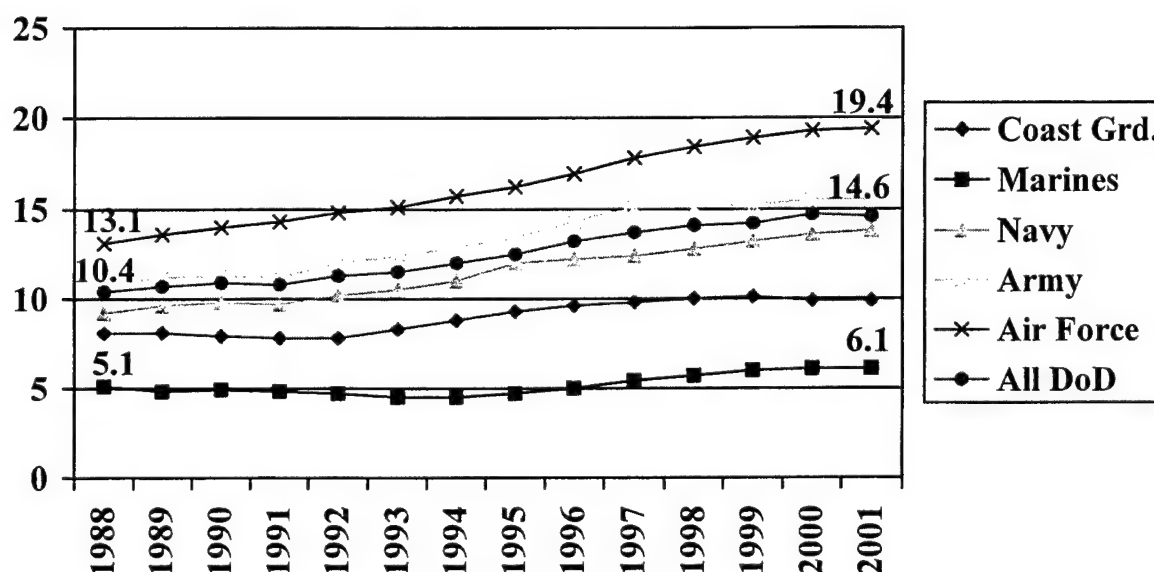
Suffice it to say that the opening of some non-traditional military occupations began as a result of a great deal of political struggle. For example, in 1988, Senators William Proxmire, William Cohen, and Dennis Deconcini requested that the General Accounting Office (GAO) investigate how the exclusion of women from combat jobs influenced the number of women entering the military, and limited the job opportunities for women already in the military (U.S. GAO 1988). The report indicated that in 1988, the combat exclusion statutes, and service policies implementing them, prohibited women from serving in 675,000 combat jobs. In addition, the active duty services also restricted women from 375,000 noncombat jobs to meet program needs created by the existence of the combat restriction. For the Army, these needs included considerations for providing rotation for men in overseas combat assignments and to insure that enough casualty replacements were available in the early part of a conflict. Other considerations included ample promotion opportunities for men in combat.

15

GAO found that the Army's accession goals limited opportunities for women even beyond the combat exclusion policy and after accounting for program needs (U.S. GAO 1988, 23). Further, GAO recommended that the Army reprogram its enlisted job system to reflect "male only" and "unrestricted" positions, creating a gender-neutral accession system for unrestricted positions. This would result in more job opportunities being available to women (U.S. GAO. 1988, 26). At the time GAO made these recommendations, many DoD officials ardently disagreed. However, despite opposition, in April 1993 Secretary of Defense Les Aspin directed the military Services to open more specialties and assignments to women. The Army responded by opening attack and scout helicopter units (Moore and Webb 1998). Brenda Moore and Schuyler Webb (1998) spoke about the Services response to Secretary of Defense Aspin's Directive and what it meant for the role of women in the military in the following way:

> Responding to a Secretary of Defense Directive in 1993, the services have increased the number of women in combat support and combat service support units. Women are now authorized to serve in 83 percent of the Army's enlisted occupations, 97 percent of the warrant officer specialties and 95 percent of the officer occupations.

Opportunities for women in the military expanded even more when, in January 1994, the Secretary of Defense announced a new assignment rule and ground definition. As a result of this announcement, the Army opened an additional 3,200 occupational specialties to women (Moore 2001). Similarly, the country has witnessed recent changes in the role of women in the Navy. In 1993, President Clinton signed the Military Bill ending combat exclusion for women on combatant ships. The following year, Congress passed the National Defense Authorization Act, permitting women to serve in combat vessels and aircraft. Sixty women were assigned to the USS Eisenhower in October of 1994 when it deployed to the Persian Gulf (Moore and Webb 1998).

While these changes in legislation open additional military occupations to women, those occupations defined by the Department of Defense as involving direct combat are still closed to women. Women are still barred from such elite units as the Army's Special Forces, the Navy's Sea-Air-Land (SEAL) units, and the Air Force Special Operations Command. Although women are assigned to combat units at the level of brigade headquarters or higher, they are not assigned to any unit involving direct physical fighting (Moore 2001:352).

One of the more current gender issues concerns the assignment of women to Naval submarines. The Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS) has recommended that the Secretary of the Navy and the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) begin the process of integrating women into the submarine community. During the Fall 1999 DACOWITS meeting, the Committee recommended the Secretary of the Navy order the redesign of the

VIRGINIA class submarines to accommodate mixed gender crews. The committee also advised the Secretary of the Navy and the Chief of Naval Operations to commence with assigning women officers to SSBNs (Submarine Service Ballistic Nuclear submarines). As stated in a briefing by the Navy's Deputy Nuclear Propulsion Program Manager, Captain Jim Ratte, ". . . the current policy of not assigning women to submarines remains unchanged and there are no plans for future submarine platforms to incorporate appropriate berthing and privacy arrangements to accommodate mixed gender crews" (see DACOWITS 2001). The Navy explained that due to their very unique space limitations, equipment density, design constraints and extended mission requirements, their policy of exclusion remains unchanged. Further, the Navy claimed that as an integral part of the combat effectiveness concerns, submarines couldn't provide the necessary privacy to properly accommodate mixed gender crews. To redesign the Virginia-class submarines would not be cost effective (see DACOWITS 2001).

Race and Gender

While the number of women, in general, has been increasing in the military, the number of African American women has been most dramatic of all racial/ethnic groups (Moore 1991). This has been most noticeable in the Army. As reported in an earlier study:
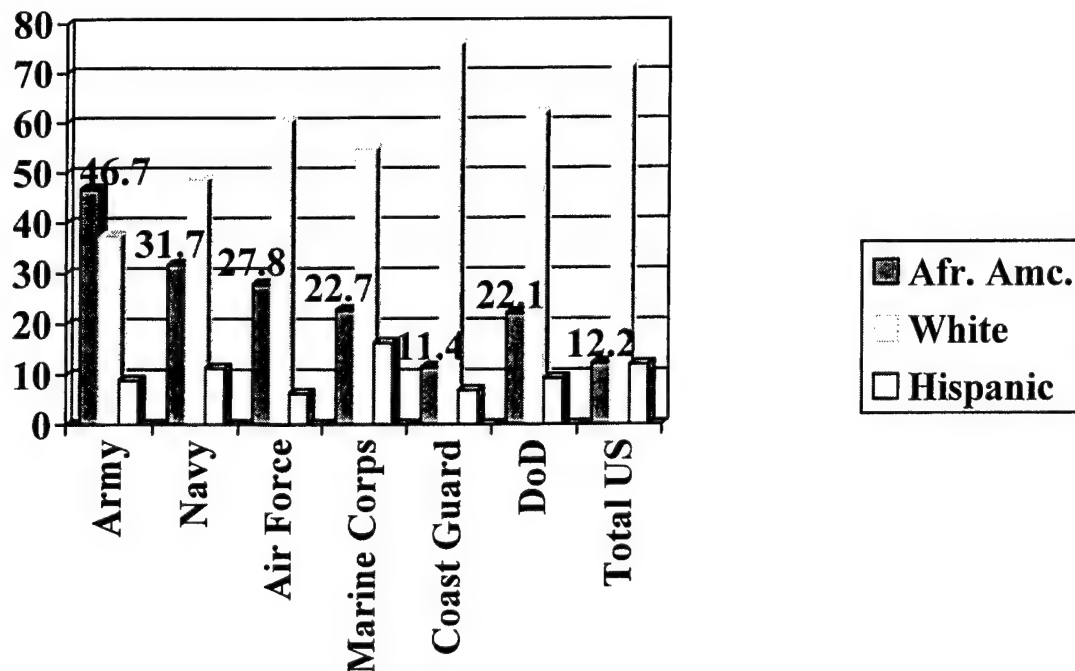
> Of all civilian black women who were either in the labor force or enrolled in school in 1988, 3.7 in every 1,000 enlisted in the active military force as compared with 1.3 in every 1,000 white women and 1.0 in every 1,000 Hispanic women (Moore 1991:364).

Unlike White women, who are concentrated in the Air Force, African-American women have always been concentrated in the Army. Today there are more African-American women in the enlisted ranks of the Army (46.7%) than women of any other racial/ethnic group (see Figure 3). Additionally, African-American enlisted women are overrepresented in each of the services except the Coast Guard where they comprise only 11.4 percent, slightly less than their percentage of the total population (12.2) (see Figure 3). Studies have shown that during the first decade of the AVF, African-American women served longer, and tended not to separate from service before their terms had expired, as compared with White women (Binkin, et. al. 1982:52-53). African-American women also reenlisted more often than did women of different racial/ethnic groups; and they tended to be single-heads of households more than any other segment of the military population (Moore 1991: 370-372).

17

Figure 3

Active Duty Enlisted Women by Race/Ethnicity
As of March 2001 (Source: DMDC)

Legend: ■ Afr. Amc. / White / □ Hispanic

Values shown: Army 46.7, Navy 31.7, Air Force 27.8, Marine Corps 22.7, Coast Guard 11.4, DoD 22.1, Total US 12.2

### Attrition and Retention Rates

Earlier studies revealed that attrition was higher for women than it was for comparably educated males (Janowitz and Moskos 1979). More recent studies have found attrition rates to be exceptionally high for White women (Moore 2000). The Army has reported that from fiscal year (FY) 1993 to FY 1998, women separated early from service at a significantly higher rate than did males. For the same time period, the Marine Corps found that White women had the highest attrition rates (Moore 2000:2).

The high rate of attrition among today's service members is surprising considering the fact that DoD has competitive economic incentives. Since the advent of the AVF, the Department of Defense increasingly emphasizes economic concerns when addressing the problem of personnel procurement. The Services continue to increase benefits for personnel, not only in pay, but also in quality of life programs. This is particularly true in the area of family life and child care services. A case in point is the 1989 Military Child Care Act that made investing in child care a high priority. Ten years later, the military paid

18

$339 million in subsidies for high quality child-care services. Fees for the service are based on parents' income.

Figure 4

Junior Enlisted Personnel on Active Duty

Propensity to Remain in the Military

Likely
22.1%
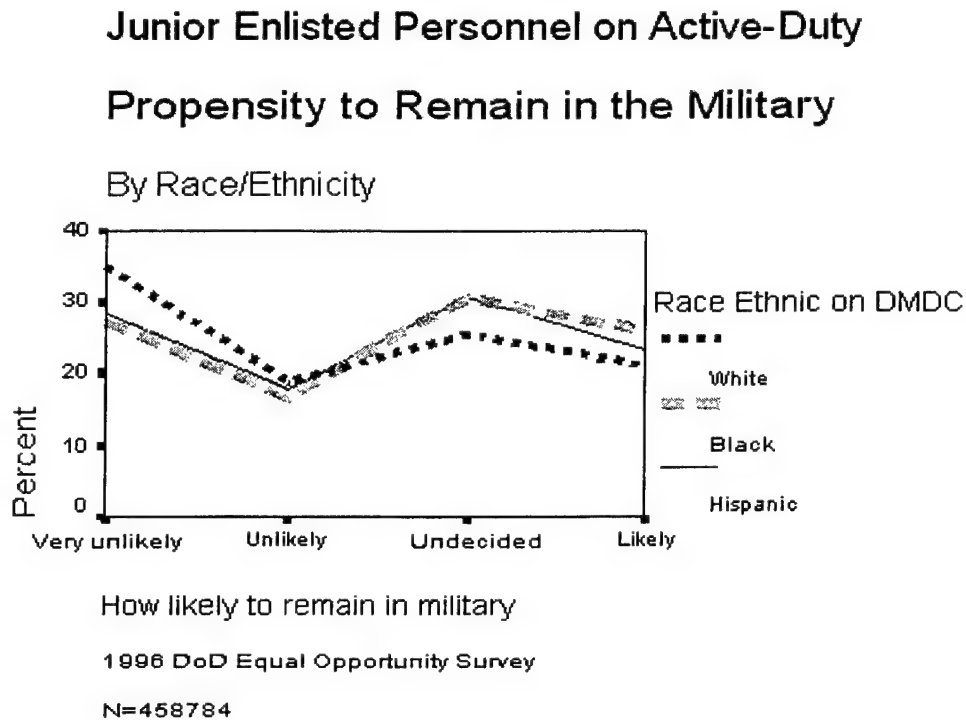
Very unlikely
32.8%

Undecided
26.8%

Unlikely
18.2%
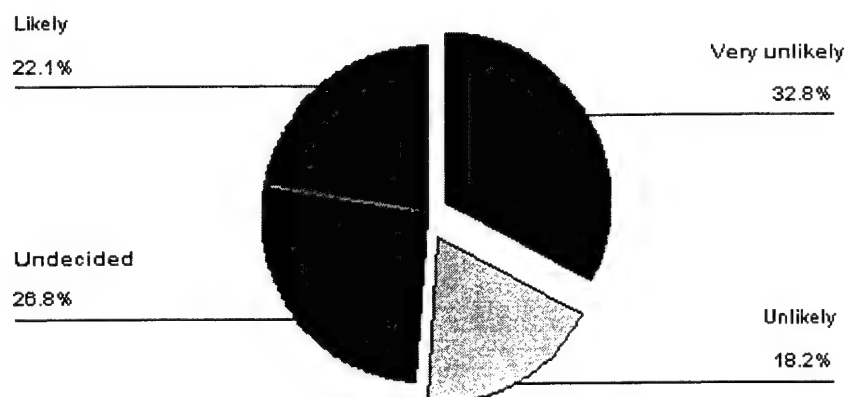
DoD 1996 Equal Opportunity Survey

N=458784

Even with these new material incentives, many active-duty military personnel leave military service before fulfilling their first-term of enlistment (GAO 1998), and the greatest proportion of them are White (Moore 2000). Figure 4 shows that over half of the junior enlisted personnel who responded to the 1996 Equal Opportunity Survey indicated that they are either unlikely or very unlikely to remain in service. Figure 5 shows that more White junior enlisted personnel in the sample indicated that they are unlikely or very unlikely to remain in the military than either Blacks or Hispanics. African-American respondents were more likely than Whites or Hispanics to remain on active duty.

Further, the findings of Moore's (2000) study show that the economic variable, "satisfaction with pay and benefits," is not the best predictor of propensity to remain in the military. Neither was the variable for "marital status." While these variables were strong predictors of propensity to remain in the military, none of them were as strong as *pride in service* (see Table in Appendix A).

19

Figure 5

Junior Enlisted Personnel on Active-Duty

Propensity to Remain in the Military

By Race/Ethnicity

Race Ethnic on DMDC

▪ ▪ ▪ ▪

White

Black

Hispanic

How likely to remain in military

1996 DoD Equal Opportunity Survey

N=458784

Motivating Enlisted Personnel to Remain in Today's Military:
An Alternative Paradigm

The core of the problem is the economic paradigm used by the military to procure personnel. The mission of the military has been, and continues to be, redefined in terms of supply and demand. Consequently, the urgency and the sacredness of Service have been diminished. No longer will we observe the "warrior hero," in the contemporary Armed Services that existed during World War II, as the sense of personal sacrifice has diminished. The contemporary Armed Services are more professional than in previous years, and are organized around the ethos of self-gain. Additionally, many of the coercive elements of military service have been discarded with the draft. Thus, while it was very difficult for active duty military personnel to leave the Service before their terms had ended during the draft era, it is practically penalty-free to do so today.

David Segal discussed the military's problem of procurement and retention in terms of two competing schools of thought: *utilitarianism vs. collectivism* (Segal 1985). On the one hand, social scientists following in the tradition of Herbert Spencer's *utilitarianism* declare that the ultimate goal of societal members is to maximize their pleasure, happiness, and consumption. For

20

example, this concept is advanced in the writings of economist, Milton Friedman (1982), John Kenneth Galbraith (1977), and sociologist, George C. Homans (1974).

On the other hand, there are those who avow that the behavior of individuals is heavily influenced by the human need for group affiliation; a concept that can be traced back to Auguste Comte's *collectivism*. Examples of this school of thought are found in the writings of Durkheim (1947), and Parsons (1947). Segal indicated that concomitant with the AVF, the Department of Defense employed a philosophy of *utilitarianism* for its policies on personnel procurement. This was done in an effort to meet personnel needs in "a modern democracy that is also compatible with its basic values." However, as Segal indicated, the concepts of *utilitarianism* and *collectivism* are not mutually exclusive; both influence the behavior of military personnel.

The Army realized the importance of group ties to the individual when its individual rotation policy proved to be dysfunctional during the Vietnam War. Subsequently, a number of initiatives were designed to deploy members of units as a group after they completed training. Such experiments included *Brigade 75* and *Brigade 76*, which provide for units to train for 90 days before being deployed to Germany where they would be stationed together, and find equipment similar to that which they had trained on. Other programs included the Army Cohesion Study Plan, which replaced and rotated companies in the mid-1980s; and the Cohesion, Operational Readiness, and Training Program, which recruited, trained, and assigned together members of company sized units (Segal 1985). However, according to Segal, these programs were unsuccessful due to ineffective management. Speaking of the *Brigade 76* program, Segal stated, ". . . its management was not up to the level of its conceptualization" (Segal 1985:165). This can be explained by the fact that the Army was, and still is, operating under an ethos of laissez-faire, emphasizing the individual rather than the collectivity.

Patricia Shields (1993) developed this argument further in an article published in *Armed Forces and Society*. Expressing the problem of defense policies in economic terms, Shields illustrated that since the advent of the AVF, a neoclassical economic paradigm has been the basis of military policies. She noted that critics, some of whom were the military sociologists mentioned above, raised questions about organizing an Army around the principles of selfishness, individuality, and rationality. Such a model, they argued, did not allow for other important factors, such as, the traditional values of duty and honor to country. While these critiques were heard and influenced such internal military initiatives as *Project Warrior* and *Operation Pride* to enhance unit cohesion, the neoclassical paradigm remained.

Drawing from Amitai Etzioni's (1988) seminal work on *socioeconomics*, Shields proposed that *socioeconomics* provides an alternative framework to the

21

neoclassical model employed by the Department of Defense. Highlighting
Etzioni's thesis, she makes the case that a socioeconomic model is far more
complete than the neoclassical model in addressing the military needs for
personnel who are both morally committed as well as materially satisfied:

> Neoclassical economics, through the assumptions of
> self-interest, utility maximization, and rationality,
> reduce moral behavior to economic terms. On the
> other hand, socioeconomics is a "deontological I &
> We paradigm" which incorporates both moral
> obligation (deontology) and goes beyond the
> individual (We). It also assumes that people select
> means, not just goals, on the basis of their emotions
> and values. (Shields 1993:516)

Germane to socioeconomic theory is the assumption that people make
decisions not only out of self interest, but also because they are part of
something larger than self: a community. Where the theory of socioeconomics
departs from that of neoclassical economics, is that the former assumes that
people do not only seek to maximize their pleasure, as does the latter, but to
attain a balance between their personal well being and the collective good. If
personnel in today's military are motivated by social influences, or what Etzioni
referred to as *normative-affective* considerations, at least as much as they are by
material concerns, then the Services may be more successful in retaining
personnel by changing or modifying their paradigm. Etzioni refers to the goals
that people pursue that are acquired from their communities, and inner moral and
emotive developments as "normative-affective" factors (Etzioni 1988:14).

This holistic approach is consistent with Maslow's theory. In his theory of
motivation, Maslow describes five fundamental needs of human beings that when
frustrated, drive human behavior. The most basic of these needs is
physiological, including such requirements as food and warmth (Maslow
1987:15-17). Maslow asserted that if and when physiological needs are
satisfied, there emerges another category of needs he labeled *safety* (including
security, stability, protection, and freedom from fear (Maslow 1987:18)). When
safety needs are gratified, there emerge the *love and affection and
belongingness* needs, causing the individual to hunger for "relations with people
in general" (Maslow 1987:20). When fulfilled, this need is followed by *esteem
needs*: a need for self-respect and the respect of others. Satisfaction of the
esteem needs leads to "self-confidence, worth strength, capability, and adequacy
of being useful and necessary in the world" (Maslow 1987:21). Finally, if and
when all of these needs are satisfied, a new discontent arises unless the
individual is doing what (s)he is suited for; unless (s)he is *self-actualized*.
(Maslow 1987:22).

To address the need for fulfillment expressed by women and men in the military, the Services may look to some of the recommendations made in previous years by military sociologists. For example, as suggested by David Segal, rather than making entry-level pay competitive with the civilian labor market, "emphasize the symbolic and solidity rewards for first-term service persons and assume that first tour personnel will develop a sense of institutional commitment" (Segal 1985). While entry-level pay, in this scenario, would be less than that of civilian jobs, new recruits may be enticed by payment in kind, i.e., the cost of their personal needs would be absorbed by the government, and a substantial increase in pay following their reenlistment.

Another plausible alternative is to implement a recommendation made in previous years by Charles Moskos: linking federal aid for higher education to a program of voluntary national service. Such service would include military reserve duty or civilian work (Moskos 1982). Moskos further suggested that a two-track military personnel and compensation system differentiating between short-term and long-term volunteers be instituted. If properly implemented, this recommendation has the potential for countering the trend toward an occupational definition of military service, instilling a greater sense of moral responsibility in American youth, as well as coping with recruitment and retention goals.

Concluding Remarks

After tracing the development of today's military structure to the Gate's Commission, and employing Moskos' institutional/occupational model, it is clear to see the structural changes that have occurred in the U.S. military in recent years. These changes have had consequences for the quantity and quality of personnel, social representation, and retention rates. There is good news and bad news associated with these findings. The good news is that the All-Volunteer Force has provided occupational opportunities for racial minorities in general, and African Americans in particular, that have not been matched in the civilian society. While the early phases of the AVF saw racial conflict and discriminatory practices against women, over time the U.S. military reduced racial/ethnic tension, and improved attitudes and practices toward female service members.

Janowitz and Moskos (1969) reported that women were generally reluctant to accept assignments outside clerical and health settings. While this may be true to some degree today, more women are serving in non-traditional roles, or in traditional roles in combat units (see Moore 2001). Structural changes in military laws and policies (e.g., repeal of combat exclusion statutes) paved the way for women to serve in greater numbers as well as in a wider array

of military occupations. Even in the face of the military downsizing of the 80s, the proportion of women on active duty has continued to increase from 9 percent in 1982 to 10.4 percent in 1988, to 11.7 percent in 1993, to 12.6 percent in 1995, to a whopping 14.6 percent today. This is partly attributable to an overall decrease in the size of the active forces.

Indeed, the Services should be applauded for their accomplishment in providing competitive economic rewards for all members. Today the Armed Services is the leading employer of African Americans, who as an aggregate, are 2.5 times as likely to be unemployed as Whites. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2000), the total unemployment of Whites as a percentage of the civilian labor force was 3.7 in 1999. For the same year, the comparable rate for African Americans was 8.0. While Hispanics also experience high rates of unemployment vis-à-vis Whites in the civilian sector, as shown in Figures 1, and 3 above, they do not gravitate toward the military in large numbers. A reason for this may be the heavy emphasis that Hispanics place on family commitment, which often conflicts with the prescribed duties of the military.

Still, while the military provides high economic rewards, it is deficient in providing the necessary symbols to sustain the motivation of members who have economic alternatives in the civilian sector; a problem that has only exacerbated since the end of the draft. Today's military service is no longer obligatory. Recruitment and retention policies are based on pay incentives, rather than normative factors, as those stemming from what Maslow characterized as a human need for *belongingness*. This raises the following questions:

1. How do the Services of the 21st Century motivate White men and women to remain on active duty when they have more lucrative economic opportunities in the civilian sector?
2. What are the consequences of the progress DoD has made over the last three decades in race relations and equal opportunity for DEOMI?
3. What are the diversity issues for the Army as the representation minority members increase and that majority members decrease?

Given the power of the *pride in service* variable in predicting the propensity of men and women to remain on active-duty, there is clearly a need for an alternative paradigm. A socioeconomic paradigm is a more complete model in addressing military personnel issues than is the current econometric model employed by the Department of Defense. The restructuring of the Armed Services for the 21st Century is inevitable. However, the U.S. Government must exercise caution to insure that the gains that have been made in the military's equal opportunity program, particularly those in race relations, are not reversed in the process. For example, paying personnel for skills rather than rank, as suggested in the DoD news briefing cited above, could have the deleterious effect of creating a dual labor market in which minorities are paid less than majority members. As DoD plans for reorganizing its Services, it must guard

24

against replacing the current structure with one that will pit one racial group against another. Social structural change need not be a zero-sum game.

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Table

Results of Multiple Regression (Junior Enlisted Only/All Services)
Dependent Variable: How likely respondents are to remain in the military

VARIABLE	DoD and Coast Guard		
	Coefficient	SE	Beta
Pride in Service	.507	.001	.385
Marital Status	.355	.003	.121
Education	-.024	.003	-.009
Pay & Benefits	.183	.001	.143
Unfair Punishment	-.090	.003	-.033
Neg. Racial Remarks	-.010	.003	-.003
Bad Racial Experience	-.137	.007	-.024
Blackmen (E1-E4)	.528	.006	.122
Blackwomen (E1-E4)	.454	.008	.073
Hispanicmen (E1-E4)	.178	.006	.038
Hispanicwomen (E1-E4)	.339	.014	.032
Whitewomen (E1-E4)	.026	.006	.005
(Constant)	*****	*****	*****

Significance at the .05 level
Note: Only the significant coefficients are reported
R Square = .23118
N=1,085,833
Constant = junior enlisted white males.

Figure B-1

Race/Ethnic Distribution of DoD Active Force
In the Enlisted Ranks (1988-2001)

Legend:
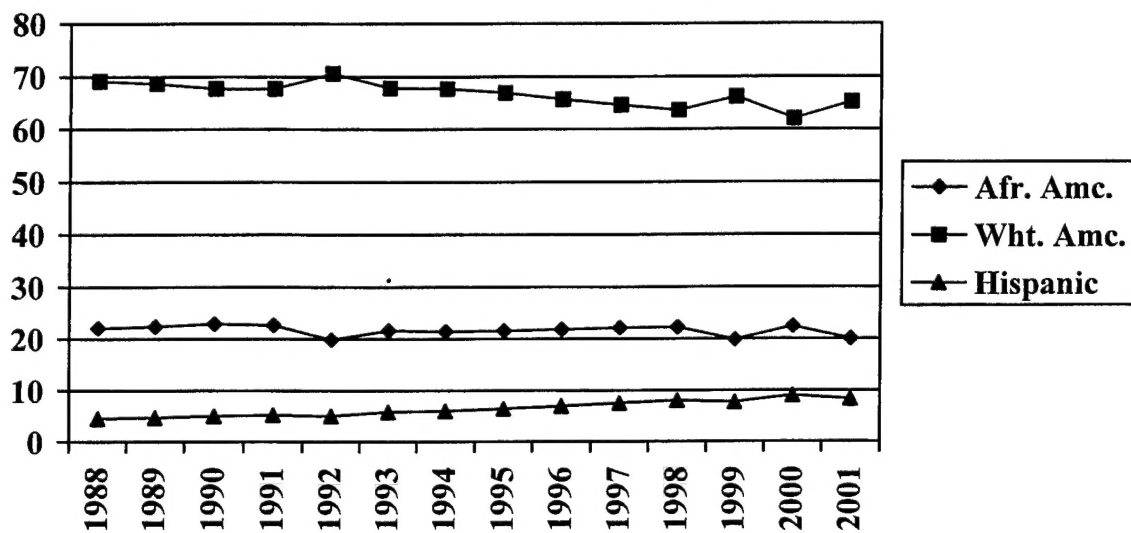- ◆ Afr. Amc.
- ■ Wht. Amc.
- ▲ Hispanic

Figure B-2

**Race/Ethnic Distribution of Army Active Force
Enlisted Ranks (1988-2001)**